

Message Text

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SUBJECT: EDITORIAL IN IRISH TIMES MARCH 29, 1978

FOLLOWING EDITORIAL APPEARED IN IRISH TIMES MARCH 29,
1978 UNDER HEADING ON TOUR:

THE WEEK-LONG TOUR OF SOME LATIN AMERICAN AND AFRICAN COUNTRIES WHICH PRESIDENT CARTER STARTED YESTERDAY HONOURS AN UNDERTAKING WHICH HAD TO BE POSTPONED LAST YEAR. IT IS, IN FACT, HIS THIRD MAJOR JOURNEY ABROAD SINCE ASSUMING OFFICE, AND UNDERSCORES A NUMBER OF HIS FUNDAMENTAL CONCERNS. AS VENEZUELA AND NIGERIA ARE ON THE ITINERARY, IT IS PLAIN THAT OIL REMAINS ONE OF THESE: THE TWO COUNTRIES ARE MAJOR EXPORTERS TO THE UNITED STATES. A PRINCIPAL REASON FOR LAST YEAR'S POSTPONEMENT, IT WILL BE REMEMBERED, WAS THE PRESIDENT'S UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT TO PERSUADE CONGRESS TO ACCEPT HIS NATIONAL ENERGY POLICY, WHICH IS STILL IN THE DOLDRUMS.

ANXIETY OVER THE PRICE OF OIL, HOWEVER, IS BY NO MEANS THE ONLY, OR EVEN THE GUIDING, MOTIVE FOR THE JOURNEY. MR. CARTER HAS BEEN BROUGHT BY CIRCUMSTANCES TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE TO THE UNITED STATES, AND TO THE WESTERN WORLD AS A WHOLE, UNCLASSIFIED

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OF INFLUENTIAL FRIENDS IN AFRICA. EVENTS IN RHODESIA/ZIMBABWE AND ON THE HORN OF AFRICA HAVE BEEN MOVING AT A COMPRESSED AND ALARMING SPEED. NIGERIA IS AFRICA'S WEALTHIEST NATION: HER SUPPORT AND CONSTRUCTIVE INVOLVEMENT WOULD BE A REASSURING DEVELOPMENT.

IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT MR. ANDREW YOUNG, THE US AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED NATIONS, WHO IS AT PRESENT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, WILL MEET MR. CARTER IN NIGERIA TO BRIEF HIM ON THE LATEST NEWS - NONE OF IT OPTIMISTIC - OF RHODESIA AND NAMIBIA. THERE IS ALSO THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE PRESIDENT WILL MEET REPRESENTATIVES OF ZAMBIA AND TANZANIA, TWO OF THE FRONT-LINE STATES, WHOSE LEADERS HAVE BEEN TRYING TO WORK OUT A BRIDGE-BUILDING OPERATION BETWEEN MR. IAN SMITH'S INTERNAL SETTLEMENT ARRANGEMENTS IN RHODESIA AND THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PLAN FOR THE PARTICIPATION OF THE MILITANT PATRIOTIC FRONT.

ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, THEN, THE NIGERIAN VISIT SEEMS TO BE POTENTIALLY THE MOST IMPORTANT SECTION OF THE TOUR. IF A WEEK IS A LONG TIME IN POLITICS, IT CAN BE EVEN LONGER IN THE CASE OF US PRESIDENTIAL POLITICS. MR. CARTER'S DIPLOMATIC BUSINESS IS ALSO EXPECTED TO INCLUDE THE GENERAL AS WELL AS THE PARTICULAR - THE ENCOURAGEMENT, FOR EXAMPLE, OF INVESTMENT AND TRADE BETWEEN INDUSTRIALISED AND DEVELOPING NATIONS; THE CASE FOR ENERGY CONSERVATION AND AGAINST UNRESTRICTED NUCLEAR CAPABILITY; THE HIGH PRIORITY, IN ALL COUNTRIES AND AT ALL TIMES, UNCLASSIFIED

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OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

IT WOULD BE FOOLISH TO IMAGINE THAT SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS ON ALL OF THESE MATTERS CAN BE MADE IN A NUMBER OF VERY DIFFERENT COUNTRIES INSIDE A WEEK. BUT PRESIDENTIAL JAUNTS OF THIS KIND SELDOM FAIL TO MAKE AN IMPRESSION, TO STIMULATE INTEREST IN A WAY OF WHICH NO OTHER DIPLOMATIC METHOD IS CAPABLE. THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN, OF COURSE, IS THAT, IF THINGS GO WRONG, THE DIRECT ASSOCIATION WITH THE PRESIDENT CAN MAKE THE OUTCOME UNIQUELY DISASTROUS. KRENE

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